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Food and Drug Administration  
Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)  
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061  
Rockville, MD 20852  
U.S.A.

Re: Docket No. 97N-0074

The risk of foodborne illness in America's food supply could be reduced by banning the practice of forced molting.

Of the many atrocities that egg layers endure, forced molting is exceptionally cruel. Because of the stress to the birds, the European egg producers restrict feed for one day. In America, it's a different story:

- Entire flocks are forced to molt concurrently
- The hens' food is removed or nutritionally reduced for approximately 10 days
- Artificial dark-light manipulation may be used
- Drugs and water removal may be used

In July, the General Accounting Office issued a report to Senator Richard J. Durbin of Illinois entitled, **Food Safety: U.S. Lacks a Consistent Farm-to-Table Approach to Egg Safety**. Between 1985 and 1998, "over three-quarters of Salmonella Enteritidis outbreaks were linked to eggs, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention." Causes cited in the report are "heavy rodent populations" and "forced molting."

I urge the FDA to oppose forced molting, thereby reducing the chances of foodborne illness.

Respectfully yours,

*Lenore Conacher*

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